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STAFF NOTES:

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Soviet Union Eastern Europe

25X1

Top Secret

25X1

162
April 23, 1975

Page Denied

25X1

SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

25X1

C O N T E N T S

April 23, 1975

More Open Soviet
Endorsement of Portugal. 1

Romania and the
Nonaligned Movement [redacted] 2

25X1

25X1

Bulgaria: Personnel
Shifts--One Up, One Down 5

25X1

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More Open Soviet Endorsement of Portugal

Articles in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* this week on the approaching Portuguese elections show the Soviets edging toward closer identification with the present regime.

Both articles deny that there is any conflict between detente and Soviet support for Portugal's "progressive" course. This line is probably intended to assure domestic audiences and put the West on notice that detente considerations will not keep the USSR from assisting, and benefiting from, Portugal's leftward movement.

The Soviets cast themselves as the true supporters of democracy in Portugal, saying that it is the West, not Moscow, that is meddling in Portuguese affairs. The *Pravda* commentary, written by its correspondent in Lisbon, is particularly critical of social democratic leaders in Western Europe who, it says, are undermining the communists in order to advance the cause of the Portuguese socialists. Moscow has been under some pressure from the social democrats to exercise a restraining influence in Portugal, but the articles suggest that thus far at least Western demarches have had little impact.

Since the so-called coup attempt of March 11, the Soviets have also been more sharply critical of NATO and the Catholic Church in Portugal.

Despite these signs of more open support of the Portuguese, Moscow still seems to be feeling its way. The Soviet equities are complex, and broader interests--including relations with the West--dictate a degree of prudence.

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25X1

25X1

April 23, 1975

25X1

Romania and the Nonaligned Movement

Romania is making some progress toward establishing a closer association with the nonaligned movement.

25X1

Since Romania was denied a role at Algiers, President Ceausescu has stressed the common interests of Romania and the nonaligned world. He has talked with scores of Third World leaders, both in Bucharest and abroad, and has persistently emphasized the rights of developing nations.

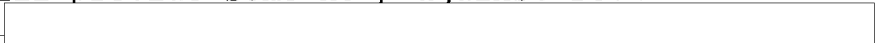
Should Romania be successful in its quest for observer status, new strains would be added to Soviet-Romanian relations. On the ideological front, Bucharest would be associating itself with nonaligned concepts such as the division of the world into the "haves"

April 23, 1975

25X1



and "have nots," rather than viewing international relations in the strict doctrinal terms of class struggle. As a practical matter, the Romanians may expect that even a tenuous link with the nonaligned movement will provide some help against Soviet pressure.



25X1

25X1

April 23, 1975



25X1

Page Denied

Bulgaria: Personnel Shifts--One Up, One Down

The recent promotion of Kiril Zarev to a deputy premiership and the chairmanship of the State Planning Committee probably is a part of Sofia's continuing effort to remedy the country's economic woes. Zarev, formerly minister of labor and social welfare, replaces the demoted Ivan Iliev, who was "transferred to other work."

Although the announcement of the shift did not specify Iliev's errors, he has clearly suffered a serious setback. He has not been reassigned to new duties, and the press has dropped all reference to him. It appears that Iliev has also been removed from his position as Bulgaria's permanent representative to CEMA. Deputy Premier Mako Dakov recently attended a CEMA Executive Committee meeting that heretofore has been Iliev's responsibility.

Zarev's experience in banking and in economic planning make him well qualified for his new duties, and he will no doubt exercise a stronger hand in formulating and directing economic policy than did Iliev. There have been indications that Zarev may take a harder line than his predecessor in implementing the regime's policies.

The US embassy in Sofia believes that Zarev's appointment may be only the first in a round of personnel shifts as the regime seeks new talent before the party congress meets next year.

25X1

25X1

April 23, 1975